

## IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) An article acquisition game apparatus including a storage unit storing a plurality of articles, and an article transferring unit enabling a player to hold the articles in the storage unit and transfer the articles to a predetermined transfer position when the player operates an operation input unit, the article acquisition game apparatus comprising:

a distributing unit provided in a drop route of the articles transferred to the transfer position, the distributing unit dividing the articles into two or more groups;

a first accumulating unit accumulating at least one group of the articles divided by the distributing unit;

an article disbursement unit allowing the player to take out at least one group of the articles other than the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit;

an operating information generating unit generating operating information based on predetermined conditions; and

an ejecting unit ejecting the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit, to the article disbursement unit, based on the operating information.

2. (Previously Presented) An article acquisition game apparatus including a storage unit storing a plurality of articles, and an article transferring unit enabling a player to hold the articles in the storage unit and transfer the articles to a predetermined transfer position when the player operates an operation input unit, the article acquisition game apparatus comprising:

a distributing unit provided in a drop route of the articles transferred to the transfer position, the distributing unit dividing the articles into two or more

groups;

a first accumulating unit accumulating at least one group of the articles divided by the distributing unit;

a second accumulating unit accumulating at least one group of the articles other than the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit;

an article disbursement unit allowing the player to take out part of the articles accumulated by the second accumulating unit;

a transportation unit transporting the articles accumulated by the second accumulating unit, to the article disbursement unit;

an operating information generation unit generating operating information based on predetermined conditions; and

an ejecting unit ejecting the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit, to the article disbursement unit, based on the operating information.

3. (Previously Presented) An article acquisition game apparatus including a storage unit storing a plurality of articles, and an article transferring unit enabling a player to hold the articles in the storage unit and transfer the articles to a predetermined transfer position when the player operates an operation input unit, the article acquisition game apparatus comprising:

a distributing unit provided in a drop route of the articles transferred to the transfer position, the distributing unit dividing the articles into two or more groups;

a first accumulating unit accumulating at least one group of the articles divided by the distributing unit;

a second accumulating unit accumulating at least one group of the articles other than the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit;

an article disbursement unit allowing the player to take out part of the articles accumulated by the second accumulating unit;

a transportation unit transporting the articles accumulated by the second accumulating unit, to the article disbursement unit;

an operating information generation unit generating operating information based on predetermined conditions; and

an ejecting unit ejecting the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit, to the second accumulating unit, based on the operating information.

4. (Previously Presented) An article acquisition game apparatus including a storage unit storing a plurality of articles, and an article transferring unit enabling each of a plurality of players to hold the articles in the storage unit and transfer the articles to a predetermined transfer position when each player operates an operation input unit provided for each player, the article acquisition game apparatus comprising:

a distributing unit provided in a drop route of the articles transferred to the transfer position, the distributing unit dividing the articles into two or more groups;

a first accumulating unit provided in common for the plurality of players and accumulating at least one group of the articles divided by the distributing unit;

a second accumulating unit accumulating at least one group of the articles other than the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit;

an article disbursement unit provided for each player and allowing the player concerned to take out part of the articles accumulated by the second accumulating unit;

a transportation unit transporting the articles accumulated by

the second accumulating unit, to the article disbursement unit;

an operating information generation unit generating operating information based on predetermined conditions; and

an ejecting unit ejecting the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit, to the article disbursement unit, based on the operating information.

5. (Previously Presented) An article acquisition game apparatus including a storage unit storing a plurality of articles, and an article transferring unit enabling each of a plurality of players to hold the articles in the storage unit and transfer the articles to a predetermined transfer position when each player operates an operation input unit provided for each player, the article acquisition game apparatus comprising:

a distributing unit provided in a drop route of the articles transferred to the transfer position, the distributing unit dividing the articles into two or more groups;

a first accumulating unit provided in common for the plurality of players and accumulating at least one group of the articles divided by the distributing unit;

a second accumulating unit accumulating at least one group of the articles other than the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit;

an article disbursement unit provided for each player and allowing the player concerned to take out part of the articles accumulated by the second accumulating unit;

a transportation unit transporting the articles accumulated by the second accumulating unit, to the article disbursement unit;

an operating information generation unit generating operating information based on predetermined conditions; and

an ejecting unit ejecting the articles accumulated by the first accumulating unit, to the second accumulating unit, based on the operating information.

6. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein the distributing unit comprises a distribution board including a flat portion and a downwardly curved lug portion on one side of the flat portion.

7. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein the operating information generation unit uses, as a trigger to generate the operating information, a detection signal which is outputted by a sensor switch when the sensor switch contacts the articles.

8. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~, further comprising a lamp ring in which lamps are arranged in a ring formation, the lamps being turned on sequentially so that lighting of the lamps occurs around a circumference of the lamp ring,

wherein a jackpot formation which causes the ejecting unit to work is detected when a lighting position of the lamp ring is in a predetermined position at the time of generating of the operating information by the operating information generating unit.

9. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein when a coin is not inserted by the player after operation of the ejecting unit, the article transferring unit is automatically operated so that the first accumulating unit is replenished with additional articles.

10. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 2 to 5, wherein the transportation unit comprises:

a plank-like pusher;

a roller having a center movable along a circular locus; and

a guide groove formed in a back surface of the pusher and brought in contact with the roller, the guide groove extending in a direction perpendicular to a direction of a sliding motion of the pusher,

wherein a radius of the locus of the roller is variable.

11. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to claim 4 or 5, wherein the transportation unit comprises:

a plurality of plank-like pushers;

a groove cam in which a guide groove is formed;

a rocking crank provided for each of the plurality of plank-like pushers and brought in contact at a first end with the guide groove formed in the groove cam; and

a guide groove formed in a back surface of each of the plurality of plank-like pushers and brought in contact with a roller at a second end of the rocking crank, the guide groove extending in a direction perpendicular to a direction of a sliding motion of a corresponding one of the plurality of plank-like pushers,

wherein a radius of rotation of the roller is variable.

12. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 to 5, wherein the first accumulating unit comprises a jackpot tray, and the ejecting unit is adapted for ejecting the articles from the jackpot tray.

13. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein the first accumulating unit comprises a jackpot tray which is provided with a slope having a loose inclination in a direction in which the articles are taken out.

14. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein the first accumulating unit comprises a jackpot tray, and the ejecting unit is adapted for rotating the jackpot tray to a position confronting the player, and for inclining the jackpot tray to eject the articles to the article disbursement unit.

15. (Original) The article acquisition game apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising a detecting unit detecting whether the jackpot tray is in a predetermined position, when the jackpot tray is housed.

16. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ ~~claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 5~~, wherein the first accumulating unit comprises a jackpot tray, and the ejecting unit is adapted such that rotation of the jackpot tray to a position confronting the player, and inclination of the jackpot tray to eject the articles to the article disbursement unit are performed by either a forward rotation operation or a reverse rotation operation of a motor driving the jackpot tray.

17. (Original) The article acquisition game apparatus according to claim 16, wherein one of a forward rotation operation and a reverse rotation operation of the motor driving the jackpot tray is selected by using a one-way clutch which is provided on a drive shaft of the motor.

18. (Original) The article acquisition game apparatus according to claim 16, wherein one of a forward rotation operation and a reverse rotation operation of the motor driving the jackpot tray is selected by using a latch mechanism which is provided on a drive shaft of the motor.

19. (Currently Amended) The article acquisition game apparatus according to ~~any of~~ claims claim 1 to 5, wherein a normal operation related to article acquisition is suspended during the ejecting of the articles to the article disbursement unit by the ejecting unit.